

Message Text

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SUBJECT: SFRC HEARING ON KOREA -- HABIB STATEMENT

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF STATEMENT BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB BEFORE APRIL 8 HEARING ON KOREA OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AND ECONOMIC POLICY OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE.

2. QUOTE MR. CHAIRMAN, DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE: I WELCOME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR BEFORE YOUR SUBCOMMITTEE TO DISCUSS OUR SECURITY RELATIONSHIPS IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA.

3. AS THE MEMBERS OF THIS SUBCOMMITTEE ARE AWARE, MILITARY TENSIONS CONTINUE TO EXIST ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA. LARGE ARMED FORCES FACE EACH OTHER ON EACH SIDE OF THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE AND, UNFORTUNATELY, THE PROMISING SOUTH-NORTH DIALOGUE WHICH BEGAN SEVERAL YEARS AGO HAS WITHERED AWAY. NORTH KOREA REMAINS INTRANSIGENTLY COMMIT-
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TED TO UNIFICATION ON ITS OWN TERMS AND HAS EMBARKED ON A

MAJOR CAMPAIGN TO ISOLATE THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA INTERNATIONALLY.

4. IN THIS SITUATION WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT WITH OUR

FORCE PRESENCE A ROUGH MILITARY BALANCE PREVAILS AND THAT NONE OF THE MAJOR POWERS WOULD WISH TO SEE A MAJOR OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES. AT THE SAME TIME, THE POSSIBILITY OF A MAJOR INCIDENT OR ACCIDENT REMAINS.

5. IN THE SECURITY AREA, THE UNITED STATES HAS A CLEAR SINGLE OBJECTIVE -- TO PRESERVE PEACE AND SECURITY ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA. IN PURSUIT OF THIS OBJECTIVE WE HAVE A MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY WITH THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA AND SUBSTANTIAL AMERICAN FORCES ARE PRESENT THERE. IN ADDITION, WE HAVE HAD OVER THE YEARS A MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WHICH HAS SUPPORTED THE EFFORTS OF THE ROK TO STRENGTHEN ITS OWN ABILITY TO DEFEND ITSELF. OUR POLICIES HAVE BEEN -- AND REMAIN -- KEY ELEMENTS IN MAINTAINING THE MILITARY BALANCE IN KOREA AND IN PRESERVING PEACE ON THE PENINSULA.

6. IN THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE FIELD, OUR PROGRAMS HAVE CHANGED AS THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA HAS BEEN ABLE TO INCREASINGLY BEAR THE ECONOMIC COSTS OF ITS OWN DEFENSE. AS YOU KNOW, AFTER FY 76 WE WILL PROVIDE NO FURTHER GRANT MATERIEL ASSISTANCE. WE HOPE ALSO, IF OUR REQUESTS BEFORE THE CONGRESS ARE APPROVED, TO MEET OUR MODERNIZATION PLAN OBJECTIVES IN FY 77. THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA HAS RECENTLY EMBARKED, ON ITS OWN INITIATIVE AND WITH ITS OWN RESOURCES, ON A MAJOR FORCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN, TO BE ACCOMPLISHED OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, TO FURTHER MODERNIZE ITS ARMED FORCES. FOR OUR PART, WE EXPECT TO CONTINUE TO REQUEST SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF FMS GUARANTEED LOANS IN SUPPORT OF OUR MUTUAL SECURITY OBJECTIVES IN KOREA.

7. WHILE SEEKING TO MAINTAIN THE MILITARY BALANCE
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ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA, WE HAVE ALSO TRIED BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY TO REDUCE TENSION AND PROMOTE MORE DURABLE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PEACE IN KOREA. AS SECRETARY KISSINGER NOTED IN HIS NOVEMBER 24 DETROIT SPEECH, WE AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA DESIRE TO MOVE TO A MORE PERMANENT SOLUTION. WE HAVE PROPOSED A CONFERENCE INCLUDING THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, NORTH KOREA, THE UNITED STATES, AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF

CHINA TO DISCUSS THE DISSOLUTION OF THE U.N. COMMAND WHILE PRESERVING THE ARMISTICE AGREEMENT. AND IN THAT CONTEXT WE ARE WILLING TO CONSIDER OTHER MEASURES TO REDUCE TENSIONS, INCLUDING A WIDER CONFERENCE TO

TO NEGOTIATE MORE FUNDAMENTAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR PEACE IN KOREA.

8. WE WILL NOT, HOWEVER, ACQUIESCE IN ANY PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD EXCLUDE THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA FROM DISCUSSIONS ABOUT ITS FUTURE. AND WE WILL NOT ALLOW OUR MILITARY PRESENCE, WHICH DERIVES FROM BILATERAL AGREEMENTS, TO BE DICTATED BY THIRD PARTIES. BUT WE ARE PREPARED -- NOW -- TO TRANSFORM THE ARMISTICE ARRANGEMENTS INTO A PERMANENT PEACE.

9. ALSO AS PART OF OUR EFFORTS TO REDUCE TENSIONS ON THE PENINSULA, WE HAVE PUBLICLY INDICATED OUR WILLINGNESS TO RECIPROCATE MOVES BY NORTH KOREA AND ITS ALLIES TO IMPROVE THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA. AND, IN SUPPORT OF SEEKING AN IMPROVED DIALOGUE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA, WE HAVE SUGGESTED DUAL ENTRY OF BOTH KOREAS INTO THE UNITED NATIONS WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THEIR EVENTUAL REUNIFICATION.

10. THE PRESIDENT IN HIS EAST-WEST CENTER SPEECH ON DECEMBER 7, 1975, REAFFIRMED OUR SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA AND NOTED THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS READY TO CONSIDER CONSTRUCTIVE WAYS OF EASING TENSIONS ON THE PENINSULA. UNFORTUNATELY, WE HAVE RECEIVED NO CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE TO ANY OF OUR EFFORTS FROM THE OTHER SIDE.

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11. IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WE BELIEVE OUR CONTINUED SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA REMAINS A CRUCIAL ELEMENT IN MAINTAINING PEACE AND STABILITY ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA AND IN THE REGION AS A WHOLE, INCLUDING JAPAN. AS YOU ARE AWARE, THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN SHARES FULLY OUR VIEW ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE U.S. SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA. FURTHER, OUR CURRENT SECURITY POLICIES SUPPORT OUR BROADER EFFORTS TO REACH A MORE LASTING ARRANGEMENT ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA, WHATEVER THE SHORT TERM PROSPECTS.

12. AT THE SAME TIME, WE DO RECOGNIZE THE PROBLEMS CAUSED FOR THE UNITED STATES BY THE DOMESTIC POLICIES

OF THE PARK GOVERNMENT. OBVIOUSLY, THE KOREAN HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN OUR POLICY CONSIDERATIONS. WE HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT WE ARE NOT HAPPY OVER WHAT HAS HAPPENED RECENTLY IN SOUTH KOREA. WE HAVE STRONGLY AND UNEQUIVOCALLY MADE KNOWN OUR VIEWS

TO THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT, BOTH IN PUBLIC AND THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. AND WE HAVE STRESSED TO THEM THE UNFAVORABLE IMPACT OF THEIR ACTIONS WITHIN THE U.S. THERE SHOULD BE NO DOUBT ABOUT THE STRONG CONCERN OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT OVER THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. IT SHOULD BE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT OUR BASIC SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA IS NOT AN ISSUE BETWEEN PRESIDENT PARK AND HIS DOMESTIC CRITICS.

13. IN SUM, OUR MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY COMMITMENT, MILITARY PRESENCE AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA HAVE BEEN AND REMAIN ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN MAINTAINING THE MILITARY BALANCE ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA. WE RECOGNIZE -- AND THIS HAS BEEN THE CONSISTENT UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT POSITION -- THAT THE SPECIFIC LEVEL OF OUR FORCES IN KOREA IS NOT IMMUTABLE. IT IS A FUNCTION OF THE NORTH KOREAN THREAT, THE ABILITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA FORCES TO MEET THAT THREAT AND THE PREVAILING INTER-
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NATIONAL SITUATION. HOWEVER, IN THE PRESENT PERIOD IN PARTICULAR, WE HAVE STRESSED OUR CONTINUING INTEREST IN EAST ASIA AND HAVE ASSURED OUR ALLIES THAT WE INTEND TO HONOR OUR COMMITMENTS AND MAINTAIN OUR PRESENCE IN THE AREA. IN THAT CONTEXT THE UNITED STATES HAS NO PRESENT PLANS FOR SIGNIFICANT FORCE REDUCTION IN KOREA.

14. WE UNDERSTAND THAT PENDING FY 76 CONGRESSIONAL LEGISLATION WOULD REQUIRE AN ANNUAL REPORT ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF OUR SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA. WE BELIEVE THAT SUCH AN ANNUAL ASSESSMENT WILL PROVIDE A USEFUL FRAMEWORK FOR BOTH THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND THE CONGRESS IN ADDRESSING THE SPECIFIC FUTURE QUESTIONS RELATING TO THAT RELATIONSHIP.
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